

REQUEST for LETTERS of INTEREST
(Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program)

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is requesting Letters of Interest from qualified vendors to operate Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program classroom(s), in accordance with the terms of this solicitation.

INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS TO OFFERORS:

Potential offerors are advised to review all sections of this Request carefully, and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.

Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this procurement are solicited. However, proposals which depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this Request will be rejected as being non-responsive.

All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this Request, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content, shall be borne by the offeror. The State assumes no responsibility for these costs.

Proposals are considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than sixty (60) days following the opening date, and may not be withdrawn, except with the express written permission of the State Purchasing Agent.

All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.

Proposals misdirected to other State locations or which are otherwise not present at the RI Department of Education at the time of opening for any cause will be determined to be late and may not be considered. The "Official" time clock is in the reception area of the RI Department of Education.

In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.1 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation shall have the right to transact business in the state until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-3040). *This will be a requirement only of the successful bidder (s).*

Offerors are advised that all materials submitted to the RI Department of Education for consideration in response to this Request for Letters of Interest will be considered to be public records, as defined in Title 38 Chapter 2 of the Rhode Island General Laws.

Also, Submitters should be aware of the State's MBE requirements, which addresses the State's goal of ten per cent (10%) participation by MBE's in all State procurements. For further information, contact the State MBE Administrator at (401) 574-8253 or cnewton@gw.doa.state.ri.us Visit the website <http://www.mbe.ri.gov>

Interested parties are instructed to peruse the Department of Education's web site on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this LOI.

Equal Employment Opportunity (RIGL 28-5.1)

§ 28-5.1-1 Declaration of policy. – (a) Equal opportunity and affirmative action toward its achievement is the policy of all units of Rhode Island state government, including all public and quasi-public agencies, commissions, boards and authorities, and in the classified, unclassified, and non-classified services of state employment. This policy applies in all areas where the state dollar is spent, in employment, public service, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation. For further information, contact the Rhode Island Equal Employment Opportunity Office, at 222-3090 or via email raymond1@gw.doa.state.ri.us

Subcontracts are permitted, provided that their use is clearly indicated in the offeror's proposal, and the subcontractor(s) proposed to be used are identified in the proposal.

REQUEST for LETTERS of INTEREST
(RHODE ISLAND PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM)

BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

This funding notification is to announce the availability of funds for implementation of the Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program with the goal of building and sustaining the expansion of a diverse delivery system of high-quality, state-funded Pre-Kindergarten programs across the state.

The Rhode Island Department of Education is committed to ensuring that all children begin school ready to learn and ready to have success in their schooling careers, as life-long learners, and productive citizens. Research shows that attending high quality early childhood education programs helps children develop important social and cognitive skills and knowledge that prepares them to succeed in school. There is clear evidence of long-lasting benefits for children who participate in very high quality educationally focused early childhood programs. The benefits to children can also generate substantial government savings, including reduced need for special education services, reduced need for cash assistance and other public benefits as well as reduced rates of incarceration. An analysis by economist Robert Lynch, from the Economic Policy Institute, predicts that:

"A public investment in providing high-quality prekindergarten to all Rhode Island children ages 3 and 4 would start paying for itself by generating cost savings within 9 years. By the year 2050, the ratio of total benefits to total costs would be 8 to 1."

Currently, there are substantial numbers of children in Rhode Island entering kindergarten who are not adequately prepared to succeed in school which may ultimately increase the risk that these children drop out of school or fail to achieve their full potential.

The award of grant funds is contingent upon the inclusion of the anticipated Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program dollars in the FY 2012 State budget. Any actions taken by a potential applicant or any costs incurred in meeting conditions of the grant program prior to passage of the budget are incurred solely by the applicant.

The Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program will enroll children who will be age 4 by September 1, 2011 and who reside in one of the following eligible districts: **Bristol Warren, Burrillville, Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Johnston, Middletown, Newport, North Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, Warwick, Westerly, West Warwick, and Woonsocket.** These communities represent Tier One and Tier Two districts in RIDE's plan to phase-in PreK over time. Tier One districts include communities with >50% of kindergarteners eligible for free and reduced price lunch. Tier Two districts include communities with 30-49% of kindergarteners eligible for free and reduced price lunch.

Selected Pre-Kindergarten sites will develop an outreach and recruitment process in partnership with The Rhode Island Department of Education to reach low and moderate income families in the target communities and invite them to apply for Pre-Kindergarten openings. Children will be randomly selected for participation in the program using a state-supervised lottery system.

Families who enroll their children in a Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program classroom will not be charged for any portion of the Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program service. There will be no co-payments, registration fees, field trip fees or enrichment fees. Field trips and enrichment activities are expected to be built into the program cost. Grantees who participate in the Child Care Subsidy program may continue to do so. Grantees may receive subsidy for the portion of the day that the child is not funded by the Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program. For example, if a program is offering a 6 hour pre-kindergarten program and wrap-around child care for the remainder of the day for a subsidized eligible child, the program may receive a part-time subsidized fee.

Applications will be evaluated on a competitive basis. The Technical Proposal Review Criteria indicate the standards and factors that will be more heavily weighted in the review process.

The Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program is administered by the Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum, which is part of the Rhode Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE).

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program funding will be offered to programs in a variety of settings in recognition of the existence of Rhode Island's diverse early childhood system which includes many high quality educational programs. The anticipated funding for the Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program will fund enrollment for approximately 72-126 four year old children in four - seven classrooms (of 18 children each) for the 2011-2012 school year.

Eligible organizations or entities include licensed child care centers, Head Start programs, public schools, and non-public schools able to operate a classroom in the following Rhode Island communities: **Bristol Warren, Burrillville, Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Johnston, Middletown, Newport, North Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, Warwick, Westerly, West Warwick, and Woonsocket.**

Interested applicants must:

- Have, at the time of application, at least one staff that meets the qualifications for Education Coordinator as specified in the RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Programs Standards for Approval.
- Be able to staff each state-funded Pre-Kindergarten classroom with a teacher who meets the qualifications for teachers (Column A only) as specified in the RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Programs Standards for Approval by the program start date.
- Be able to staff each state-funded Pre-Kindergarten classroom with a teacher assistant who meets the qualifications for teacher assistants as specified in the RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Programs Standards for Approval by the program start date.
- Be able to provide wrap-around child care OR have a strong connection with and transportation to/from at least one child care provider for families that need it.
- Be prepared to assume the administrative responsibilities associated with participation in this program and its evaluation, including, but not limited to:

- Attendance monitoring
 - On-going progress monitoring using an on-line child assessment system
 - Review of internal self-assessment and external monitoring reports to determine progress in implementing program standards
 - Site visits by RIDE and Evaluators to observe the Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program classrooms and conduct meetings with administrators and others
 - Participation by grantees in required components of the evaluation
 - Provision of required information through narrative and budget reports submitted on a quarterly basis and other informational requests
 - Participation at required Grantee meetings and trainings
- Host an Open House for prospective parents between July 5 and July 29, 2011 to facilitate the outreach and recruitment process by allowing prospective families to visit the program.
 - Be prepared to conduct recruitment, to manage the application process, and to conduct a state-supervised lottery to select children for participation from July - September 2011.
 - Operate the Pre-Kindergarten Program classroom for a minimum of 6 hours per day and 180 days per year. It is the intention of RIDE that awarded programs begin implementing Pre-Kindergarten services no later than the 12th day of September, 2011. All applicants must demonstrate their ability and intention to open by this date and operate a full day program for 180 days.
 - Compensate all Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program teachers and teaching assistants with a competitive salary and benefits based on their credentials, experience, and past performance.

Joint applications for funds may be submitted. However, in each case the lead agency chief administrative officer who will retain fiduciary and other administrative responsibilities for the grant must be designated and indicated in the application.

SCOPE OF WORK

Tasks

1. Recruit participants, collect applications, and conduct a state-supervised lottery to determine enrollment.
 - a. Ensure applicants meet state specified requirements regarding age and primary residence.
2. Implement a comprehensive early childhood education program for a minimum of 180 days for at least 6 hours per day.
 - a. Grantee must meet and maintain standards as specified in the RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Programs Standards for Approval.
3. Maintain an active enrollment of 18 children per classroom.
 - a. Grantee will only disenroll and replace children in Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program classrooms in consultation with RIDE staff
4. Implement a comprehensive system of child assessment used to inform instruction and support children's development and learning.

- a. Collaborate with local school district Child Outreach program to screen each child
 - b. Use child assessment system and measures identified by RIDE to assess children's learning and development in an ongoing manner.
5. Develop and maintain collaborative relationships with community partners to ensure full inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special health care needs.
6. Participate fully in all professional development opportunities identified by RIDE.
7. Provide RIDE with required information through narrative and budget reports submitted on a monthly and/or quarterly basis and other informational requests, as needed.
8. Provide RIDE with evaluation information, including student data, as requested.
9. Collaborate with local schools to facilitate the transition to kindergarten for enrolled children.

Deliverables

<i>Task</i>	<i>Deliverables</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<i>Task #1</i>	Recruit participants, collect applications, and conduct a state-supervised lottery to determine enrollment.	July – September 2011
<i>Task #2</i>	Implement a comprehensive early childhood education program for a minimum of 180 days for at least 6 hours per day.	No later than September 12, 2011 and ongoing from September through June for remainder of contract
<i>Task #3</i>	Maintain an active enrollment of 18 children per classroom.	Immediately upon start of school and ongoing from September through June for remainder of contract
<i>Task #4</i>	Implement a comprehensive system of child assessment used to inform instruction and support children's development and learning	Immediately upon start of school and ongoing from September through June for remainder of contract
<i>Task #5</i>	Develop and maintain collaborative relationships with community partners to ensure full inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special health care needs.	Immediately upon start of school and ongoing from September through June for remainder of contract
<i>Task #6</i>	Participate fully in all professional development opportunities identified by Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program staff.	Immediately upon execution of contract and ongoing from September through June for remainder of contract
<i>Task #7</i>	Provide RIDE with required information through narrative and budget reports submitted on a monthly and/or quarterly basis and other informational requests, as needed.	Immediately upon execution of contract and ongoing from September through June for remainder of contract
<i>Task #8</i>	Provide RIDE with evaluation information, including student data, as requested.	Immediately upon start of school and ongoing from September through June for remainder of contract.
<i>Task #9</i>	Collaborate with local schools to facilitate the transition to kindergarten for enrolled children.	Immediately upon execution of contract and ongoing from September through June for remainder of contract

ADDITIONAL COMPETITIVE FACTORS

The following factors lead to more competitive applications:

- Experience serving low-income children.
- Ability to open a new state-funded Pre-K classroom without displacing current families.
- Participation in BrightStars, RI's Quality Rating and Improvement System if eligible.
Programs eligible for participation in BrightStars include: Licensed Child Care Centers, Head Start programs and RIDE Approved Preschools.
- NAEYC Accreditation
- Innovative approaches that will meet the specific needs of children and families in the community.
- Existing community partnerships which will enhance services provided to PreK Program children and families.
- Experience working successfully with English Language Learners
- Classroom quality as demonstrated by recent results of classroom quality assessments conducted in classrooms of proposed PreK teacher(s), including, but not limited to:
 - ECERS
 - CLASS
 - ELLCO
- Evidence of positive learning outcomes for previous classroom participants.
- Classroom supervision and support provided by an early childhood education leader with an advanced degree in early childhood education.
- Participation in other initiatives designed to improve quality of program (e.g. RIELS Technical Assistance, Early Reading First)

TERMS OF THE CONTRACT

The Contract will begin **July 2011** and end **June 2014**. The scope of the work may be modified by RIDE prior to beginning work on a given task. Subsequent years' activities are dependent on the availability of funding and may be modified by mutual consent. RIDE retains the option of granting a time extension of up to **one year** with additional funding if available and if the level of work is expanded by mutual written consent.

COST PROPOSAL/TERMS OF PAYMENT

The Rhode Island Department of Education anticipates making individual grant awards in accordance with the school funding formula per child allocation. Awards will not exceed \$209,988.00 per classroom per year (this reflects the potential cost of operating a full-day (minimum of 6 hours), high quality program for 18 children for a minimum of 180 days per year).

The award process will consist of two stages. An application will be required from all interested bidders. Applications will be reviewed by a technical review committee. Selected applicants will participate in 2-3 hour budget planning session with RIDE and other entities to be determined by RIDE. During this session, selected applicants will work with RIDE to develop an appropriate program budget for the Pre-Kindergarten Program classroom. Once the budget is finalized, RIDE will complete the contracting process with each applicant.

The budget for each classroom will be customized for each selected applicant based on the appropriate expected cost to run a Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program classroom (within the total classroom allotment) in that setting. In general, the anticipated budget breakdown is as follows:

Category	Range
Salaries for teacher and teacher asst.	45-55%
Benefits for teacher and teacher asst.	16-18%
Instructional Supplies	2-4%
Meals and Snacks	8-10%
Facilities	3-5%
Non-Instructional expenses	1-3%
Administration	3-5%

Please prepare a preliminary proposal based on your agency's anticipated costs to operate Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program classroom. Please note that funds may only be used to cover the costs to operate the Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program classroom. While this can include an appropriate allocation of shared expenses such as facilities costs and administrative costs, programs may not use Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program funds to cover costs that are not directly related to the Rhode Island Pre-Kindergarten Program classroom.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Questions: Questions concerning this solicitation may be e-mailed to Michele Palermo at the Department of Education at michele.palermo@ride.ri.gov no later than May 27, 2011. **Send your questions in Microsoft Word format.** Please reference the LOI title on all correspondence. Questions received, if any, will be posted and answered on the RIDE website as an addendum to this solicitation by June 3, 2011. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information.

Application Timeline:

June 10, 2011:	Applications due.
June 17, 2011	Projected announcement of selected programs. Grants are contingent upon the availability of funding.
July 5 -29, 2011	Open Houses for prospective families.
July 29, 2011	Student applications due.
August 1-5, 2011	Lotteries to select participants at each site.

Proposals (submit an original plus 5 copies) should include the following:

1. A completed and signed RI Pre-Kindergarten Program General Application
2. A Cost Proposal as described above.
3. A *separate* Technical Proposal (see below) describing the qualifications and background of the applicant and experience with similar programs, as well as the work plan or approach

proposed for this requirement.

4. A completed and signed W-9 (taxpayer identification number and certification). Form is downloadable at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
5. Financial statements for the past two years, including your last audited or reviewed financial statement.
6. Required Attachments:

	Roster of Board Members or Governance Entity
	Current Organizational Chart
	Curriculum Framework
	Staff resumes and teaching certifications for the Pre-Kindergarten Program Administrator
	Staff resumes and teaching certifications for the Pre-Kindergarten Program Teacher and Teacher Assistant (or job descriptions if not yet hired)
	2010-2011 School Calendar
	Proposed 2011-2012 School Calendar for the Pre-Kindergarten Program

Mail or Deliver to:

RI Department of Education
Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum
Attn: Michele Palermo
255 Westminster St.
Room 400
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Contractor assumes all responsibilities for proposals submitted by mail or commercial delivery service. Proposals misdirected to other state locations or which are otherwise not present in the Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum at the time of opening, for any cause, will be determined to be late and will not be considered. Faxed or emailed responses will not be considered.

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL REQUIRED ELEMENTS

Assemble your technical proposal as outlined below. The technical proposal may be no longer than 15 single-spaced pages. Margins must be at least 1 inch on all sides.

Experience and Capacity

Describe your existing early education program. Include information on your program's leadership, your philosophy & educational approach, participation in quality initiatives and the outcomes you have achieved. Briefly describe your planned program, including the anticipated location and outcomes. Discuss your ability to open a new state-funded Pre-Kindergarten classroom without displacing current families. Attach a list of your board of directors or governance entity, your 2010-2011 school calendar, and an organizational chart.

Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program

Describe your program's ability to implement a comprehensive early childhood education program as specified in the RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Programs Standards for Approval by the Pre-Kindergarten Program start date. Provide any information which demonstrates the quality of the educational program you provide; including, but not limited to, classroom quality assessments conducted on classrooms of proposed Pre-Kindergarten classroom staff and child assessment information demonstrating improved developmental and learning outcomes.

Please attach copies of your program's written curriculum framework and any other documents that will be used to guide teacher's instructional practices. In addition, if your program intends to use any published curriculum resources, please outline these resources and describe how they will be used.

Please provide information about the program's system for child assessment including how this information is collected and used to:

- 1) adjust the curriculum to address each child's strengths and needs.
- 2) inform families about children's progress.

Please describe how the program supports the inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special health care needs in the program.

Staffing Qualifications

Please summarize the background and qualifications of the proposed Pre-Kindergarten Program administrator and all teaching staff. Provide evidence that staff are knowledgeable about high-quality early childhood programs and are effective in planning, organizing and implementing them. Please attach resumes and any appropriate teaching certificates for individuals already on staff. Include detailed job descriptions for positions that will need to be filled. Please note that evidence that all staff meet the specified qualifications will be required prior to final funding approval. Please identify any other individuals, irrespective of funding source, who will regularly be present in the Pre-Kindergarten Classroom and specify their role.

Using the table format outlined below, attach a list and description of the titles and roles of all full-time and part-time staff to be paid by the RI Pre-Kindergarten Program grant.

Position Title	FTE	Name of Staff	List Relevant Credentials (Teacher Certification and Number of College ECE credits)

Administrative Supervision and Support

Describe the program's system of staff supervision and support. Identify the individual(s) who will be responsible for supervising the RI Pre-Kindergarten Program classroom. Discuss the plan for ensuring RI Pre-Kindergarten Program classroom staff will have adequate time to plan and prepare for program implementation and to document and review child assessment information in consultation with others; including the weekly planning schedule, classroom coverage if planning occurs during school hours, the individuals who will be involved, and how planning time will be used. Discuss the plan for ensuring program staff are available for professional development opportunities planned throughout the year.

Family Engagement

Describe the family engagement opportunities that will ensure that parents play an integral role in supporting children's learning through both classroom-based and home activities and show how the program will ensure that family information is used to inform curriculum planning.

Describe the activities that will ensure that communication between home and the RI Pre-Kindergarten Program classroom will be regular, two-way, and meaningful.

Community Collaboration

Describe how services and activities will be coordinated with other programs in the same service area that provide education, welfare, and health services to young children and their families (e.g. other birth-to-age-3 programs, early childhood special education, Head Start, Even Start, Title I, child care providers).

Describe how children will make the transition both into and out of the program, including into kindergarten.

Additional Competitive Factors

Address any factors not already addressed which demonstrate the quality of the educational program and the likelihood that the learning and development of children will be positively impacted by program participation.

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL REVIEW CRITERIA

A technical review team convened by the Rhode Island Department of Education will review each complete application using these criteria:

Category	Points
Experience and Capacity	5
Educational Program Quality	25
Staffing	15
Administrative Supervision and Support	15
Family Engagement	10

Community Collaboration	10
Additional Competitive Factors	10
Cost Proposal	10

APPENDIX A

BUDGET Multi-Year Projects

The Contractor estimates that its budget for work to be performed under this Agreement is as follows:

<u>Expense Category</u>	<u>Estimated Expenditures</u>		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
1. Salary and Fringe Benefits	0	0	0
2. Consultant	0	0	0
3. In-State Travel	0	0	0
4. Out-of-State Travel	0	0	0
5. Printing	0	0	0
6. Office Expense	0	0	0
7. Telephone	0	0	0
8. Educational Materials	0	0	0
9. Equipment	0	0	0
10. Data Processing	0	0	0
11. Rental	0	0	0
12. Other	0	0	0
13.	0	0	0
14.	0	0	0
15.	0	0	0
16.	0	0	0
Subtotal	0	0	0
Indirect Cost	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0

It is understood and agreed that the amounts indicated above for the several line items are estimates of expenditures to be incurred by the Contractor on behalf of this Agreement and to be claimed by the Contractor for reimbursement under this Agreement. It is further understood and agreed that actual expenditures may vary from the estimates set forth above and that such variations shall not in themselves be cause for disallowance of reimbursement by RIDE; provided, however, that the Contractor shall notify and obtain the approval of the contract officer, in writing, if expenditures to be claimed for reimbursement in any line item above shall begin to vary significantly from the estimate given above; and provided further that unless permission of the contract officer shall have been obtained in advance, no expenditure shall be claimed by the Contractor for reimbursement by RIDE under this Agreement if such expenditure shall have been incurred in a line item category not listed above. Transfer of funds is permitted between Expense Categories (1) (2) and (3) up to 10% or \$25,000, whichever is less; all other transfers require prior written approval by the Department of Education.

BUDGET DETAIL SHEET
FISCAL YEAR _____

SALARY AND FRINGE BENEFIT DETAIL

NAME	POSITION TITLE	HOURLY RATE \$	NUMBER OF HOURS	TOTAL SALARY \$	FRINGE BENEFITS \$	HOURLY RATE WITH FRINGE BENEFITS \$	SALARY & FRINGE TOTAL \$
TOTAL REQUEST							

DETAIL OF CONSULTANT

NAME	POSITION TITLE	HOURLY RATE \$	NUMBER OF HOURS	TOTAL COST \$
TOTAL REQUEST				\$

EXPLANATION OF OTHER EXPENSES (i.e. travel, printing, office supplies, educational materials, and equipment)

EXPENSE CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	COST